

Most amateurs I speak with are of one opinion and this is it. As the number of consumers increases, BPL will gain a life of its own that may involve Congressional usurpation of FCC spectrum allocation authority to the detriment of the Amateur Radio Service.

We were not sleeping when our 220 MHz allocation was taken away to provide a commercial service that never materialized. The frequencies lost have not been returned, and this also has not gone unnoticed.

BPL should begin with the idea that it is a temporary solution best solved by point to point microwave networking amenable to good engineering practices that will enable qualified RF engineers to reduce or eliminate unwanted emissions in accordance with good engineering practices.

Electric utilities are completely unmoved by complaints or by letters from the enforcement bureau that direct them to inquire as to whether the ARRL has any wisdom to share that might lessen the impact of their operations. Public utilities march to a different drummer. Their focus is determined by regulatory agencies that insist upon fiscal frugality. Where rate payers may be forced to suffer as a requirement for reducing harmful byproducts of transmission line operation, our experience has been that the rate payers are protected while the licensed RF users are not protected.

FCC is a toothless tiger where powerline noise is concerned even without BPL.

Question: If you are not presently able to make public utilities obey existing regulations, how will you compel them to obey when the sheer volume of traffic using BPL generates additional noise?

I believe we all know the answer to that inquiry. The FCC will do what it always does when dealing with electric utilities. You will rattle your sabre a bit, try to placate the injured parties by giving the appearance of enforcement, and do absolutely nothing substantive to require compliance.

Let an amateur radio operator throw a spurious emission or utter a thoughtless expletive and Mr. Hollingsworth's famous letters appear at twice the speed of bad gossip (which as we all know is the fastest thing in the universe.)

Unless Mr. Hollingsworth is equally enthusiastic about keeping the noise level down low enough so that we amateurs are not required to run 1500 watts and a gain array to carry out communications formerly accomplished with 100 watts, then I think BPL is a bad idea.

Knowing the Commission's track record vis a vis enforcement actions against public utilities (it's a short record, and one easily read in a very few minutes), it seems to me that FCC ought to be steering a course that puts BPL in the 'point to point microwave' business as quickly as the towers can be constructed. There is no shortage of SHF spectrum available for ultra wide band emissions on a local point to point basis. Half a dozen hops

connects the most remote farm house to a T3 line nearer a metro area and the problem is solved without subjecting the whole radio spectrum to needless and completely preventable "hash" and white noise.